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ABSTRACT

This report describes a program that was implemented to improve student assessment through the use of portfolios. The targeted population consisted of a first and third grade classroom in a suburb of a large Midwestern metropolitan area. The problems related to assessment were documented by state mandated test scores, teacher determined grades, teacher observations, student and parent surveys, and anecdotal records. Analysis of the probable cause data revealed that tests scores do not provide a clear picture of student growth and development. Evidence of this problem is low test scores, poor quality work, a discrepancy between performance on tests and student ability, and parental difficulty in understanding test scores. These factors, particularly the discrepancy between state-mandated test scores and teacher-determined grades in language arts, caused difficulty in clearly seeing and interpreting growth and development in student performance. A review of solution strategies suggested by credible sources combined with analysis of the problem setting resulted in a determination to use portfolio assessment in language arts as an intervention strategy. The intervention strategy included student-maintained portfolios, student and parent conferencing with teachers, and the use of a variety of authentic assessments. Post intervention data indicated that the use of portfolios provides students with a sense of ownership in their own learning and provides both parents and students with a more complete picture of student growth and development over time. Portfolios can be used to complement rather than substitute for testing and provide a more complete picture of student achievement and progress. They also provide teachers with a more complete picture of the successes of their teaching and areas where improvement is needed. (Contains 10 figures of data and 23 references. Appendixes contain data, survey instruments, and self-evaluation forms.) (Author/RS)

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IMPROVING STUDENT ASSESSMENT THROUGH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PORTFOLIOS IN LANGUAGE ARTS

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An Action Research Project Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the

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ABSTRACT

Title: Improving student assessment through the implementation of portfolios in language arts

This report describes a program that was implemented to improve student assessment through the use of portfolios. The targeted population consisted of a first and third grade classroom in a suburb of a large Mid western metropolitan area. The problems related to assessment were documented by state mandated test scores, teacher determined grades, teacher observations, student and parent surveys, and anecdotal records.

Analysis of the probable cause data revealed that tests scores do not provide a clear picture of student growth and development. Evidence of this problem is low test scores, poor quality work, a discrepancy between performance on tests and student ability, and parental difficulty understanding test scores. These factors, particularly the discrepancy between state mandated test scores and teacher determined grades in language arts, caused difficulty in clearly seeing and interpreting growth and development in student performance.

A review of solution strategies suggested by credible sources combined with analysis of the problem setting resulted in a determination to use portfolio assessment in language arts as an intervention strategy. The intervention strategy included student maintained portfolios, student and parent conferencing with teachers, and the use of a variety of authentic assessments.

Post intervention data indicated that the use of portfolios provides students with a sense of ownership in their own learning and provides both parents and students with a more complete picture of student growth and development over time. Portfolios can be used to complement rather than substitute for testing and provide a more complete picture of student achievement and progress. They also provide teachers with a more complete picture of the successes of their teaching and areas where improvement is needed.

Chapter One

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTEXT

General Statement of the Problem

In the targeted school formal and standardized assessment and testing do not provide a complete assessment of student's academic growth and performance. This is evidenced by teacher observation of students' classroom performance as compared to test results, by student and parent anecdotal comments and by students' behavior during testing.

Immediate Problem Context

The targeted elementary school is located in a northwestern suburb of a Midwest city. The enrollment is 552 students. Seventy-seven point five percent of the student body are White, 10.5% Asian, 6.4% Black, and 5.6% Hispanic. The population includes 3.9% low-income students and 7.3% Limited English-Proficient (LEP) students. Free lunches are made available for eligible low-income students. Students who have been found to be eligible for bilingual education are serviced by P.E.P. (Potentially English Proficient) program. Ninety six percent of the student population attend school regularly with a student

mobility rate of 18.5%. Chronic truants are students who are absent from school without valid cause for 10% or more of the last 180 school days. Four chronic truants contribute to a truancy rate of 0.7%.

The school is comprised of five sections each of grades one through four, five sections of half-day kindergarten, and four half-day sections of Early Childhood. The Early Childhood sections are part of the district's special education program housed by the school. Students who are not placed in special education classrooms attend their home schools. The school currently has three students with disabilities who are included in general education classrooms in kindergarten through the fourth grades. Twelve resource students are also participating in the general education classrooms in kindergarten through fourth grade. A "Gifted" program has been implemented to service third and fourth graders who score in the upper 8-10% on reading and math achievement tests. They are clustered in groups of 3-6 students and placed in self-contained, general education classrooms where they are serviced one hour per week by the gifted coordinator. The average class size of kindergarten through fourth grades is 22.9 students.

The school's intent is to develop the full potential of each student's intellectual, ethical, physical, creative, cultural, social, and technological capabilities. To accomplish this, the school employs two administrators and twenty-eight teachers in addition to an extensive support staff. The support staff includes a school psychologist, social worker, resource consultant, occupational

therapist, physical therapist, adaptive physical education teacher, two and a half speech and language therapists, a reading specialist, and a school nurse.

Students in grades one through four attend music for two twenty-five minute periods, physical education for three twenty-five minute periods, and one hour of art per week. Bright Start is a school-based program that provides beginning readers with remedial reading services. Eligible first grade students receive pull-out services five times a week. In 1997 the district implemented a technology model which included the purchase of two computers per classroom as well as a fifteen-computer lab. In order to promote the use of technology in the classrooms, teachers are required to earn forty-eight hours of technology credit in a three year span, through courses offered by the district. Before and after school programs available to students include "Just Say No.", "Wee Deliver" inter-school mail, "Bank-At-School", "Roaring Readers Club", a writing club, and safety patrol.

This school opened as a two-story, nineteen-classroom building in 1979. It was comprised of two kindergarten rooms, three rooms of each grade level, first through fifth, a special education room, a music room, a double-teaching station gymnasium, a learning center, administrative offices, and storage. The school housed five hundred students. Since 1979 the building has undergone two reconstructions to meet the needs of growing enrollment. The school is now a twenty-three classroom school including three kindergarten classrooms, five sections of grades fist through fourth, a larger LLC, a computer lab, and an enlarged gymnasium (1997-1998 School Report Card).

The Classroom

This study designates two classrooms for its focus. Classroom A is a general education, self-contained, third grade classroom. Classroom B is a general education, self-contained, first grade classroom. The school day for each classroom consists of six hours of instruction beginning at 9:00 a.m. and ending at 3:30 p.m., with a forty-minute break for lunch/recess. The curriculum for Classrooms A and B includes instruction of 750 minutes in language arts per week, 250 minutes in math per week, 150 minutes in science per week, 150 minutes in social studies per week, and 50 minutes of movement education per week.

The School District

The targeted site is part of a seven-school district, with five elementary K-4th, one middle school 5th-6th, and one junior high 7th-8th. This district services three local communities. The average teaching experience for the district is 9.2 years. The percentage of teachers who hold Bachelor's degrees is 61.6%, with the remaining 38.4% having earned Masters or above. The average pupil to teacher ratio is 22.1:1. The pupil to administration ratio is 298.2:1. The district's average teacher salary is $37,558. The average administrator's salary is $74,085. The targeted district spends $4,353 per pupil annually (1997-1998 School Report Card).

The Surrounding Community

Students who attend the targeted site belong to one community. According to the 1994 census, this community has a total population of 39,100.

The median age of this community is 29.2 years. The population breakdown is 88.5% are White, 7.8% Asian, 6.6% Hispanic, 3.8% Black, 0.3% other and 0.2% American-Indian. Seventy point eight percent of the people own homes, while 29.2% rent. The average home sells for $159,000. Twelve point three percent of the population have less than a high school education. Twenty-three point five percent are high school graduates, 26.6% have attended some college without earning a degree. Eight percent hold an Associate degree, 23.4% hold a Bachelor's degree, and 6.3% have earned a Master's degree or above. The median household income is $62,155. The unemployment rate is 4.3%. Within the community there are thirteen religious institutions, one public library, and one hotel convention center. A regional shopping mall is located a half-mile north of the town. There are three community shopping centers and twelve neighborhood shopping plazas. The community's park district consists of twenty-nine parks and playgrounds, two water parks, organized football, baseball, soccer and swim programs.

National Context of Problem

The problem of accurately measuring student achievement has caused concern at local, state and national levels. Educational assessment has become a central issues of education in the 1990s (Weldin & Tumarkin, 1997). Since publication of *A Nation at Risk* in 1983, which alleged that US students had serious achievement deficits, states and local districts have implemented mandatory achievement testing at specified grade levels as a condition for promotion.

In Illinois, the IGAP and ISAT tests are used to compare student achievement levels and to determine which schools are failing to meet state academic standards. The demand that local school districts and their teachers be measurably accountable for students' academic achievement has led to the implementation of standardized testing. Yet, traditional and standardized assessments that have been widely used only address a small portion of students' skills and knowledge. "The currently available state and national tests produce a partial picture of student achievement, do not correlate with school performance "(Cole, Ryan & Kick, 1995, p. 3). Standardized tests do not show the individual's ongoing process of growth and development that is crucial to accurately assess an elementary student's achievements. Tests often show what the students do not know, rather than what they do know (Micklo, 1997).

> Standardized assessment, on the other hand, is an unusual event in the life of a child. It asks the child to provide a singular desired response, provides a summary of the child's failures on certain tasks and provides little diagnostic information. Instead, it provides ranking information how a child compares to his peers. It is a one-time snapshot of a student's ability, assessing artificial tasks. which may not be meaningful to the child. In addition, standardized testing provides parents with essentially meaningless and often frightening numerical data, reinforcing the idea that the curriculum rather than the child is the center of the educational process (Grubb & Courtney, 1996 p. 9).

The over reliance on achievement test in assessing student performance is causing a test-driven curriculum (Grubb & Courtney, 1996). Standardized tests often tend to focus on factual content rather than real life application, problem solving and creativity. Some critics contend they measure general knowledge rather then appropriate skills (Reckase, 1997). Resnick and Resnick believe that

standardized test results in students acquiring meaningless information and leads to a narrow curriculum where teachers teach the information on which students will be tested (cited in Supovitz & Brennan ,1997). Contemporary instructional practices have changed significantly in the area of language arts and have created the need for assessment strategies that reflect these changes (Fredrick & Shaw, 1996). Traditional assessment fails to encourage lifelong skill acquisition, and limits students reflecting on and judging their own work (Cole, Ryan & Kick,1995).

Traditional and standardized tests are often emotionally stressful to students who are taking them. Students describe exams as stressful, boring and even believe their best effort result in a poor grade (Stix & Morse,1996). Several factors such as anxiety, fatigue, language diversity and learning disabilities may contribute to students not performing well on tests (Micklo,1997). As a result, standardized tests provide only a limited measure of the students' abilities.

Chapter 2

PROBLEM DOCUMENTATION

Chapter two, problem documentation is organized into three parts: Problem Evidence, Probable Causes and Review of Literature related to Probable Causes. The sections on Problem Evidence and Causes are based on the site. The literature is based on selected articles in the area appropriate research. Causes are confirmed and elaborated on by the literature.

PROBLEM EVIDENCE

The problem deals with the inadequacy of the conventional means of students' assessment at the site. Evidence of the existence of the problem includes:

(1) IGAP reading scores from 1997 - 1998

(2) Average reading grade, determined by third grade teachers, 1997 -1998

(3) Parent survey on assessment, first and third grade, 1998 -1999 school year

The following table is based on IGAP Destination Report (see Appendix A)

Figure 1

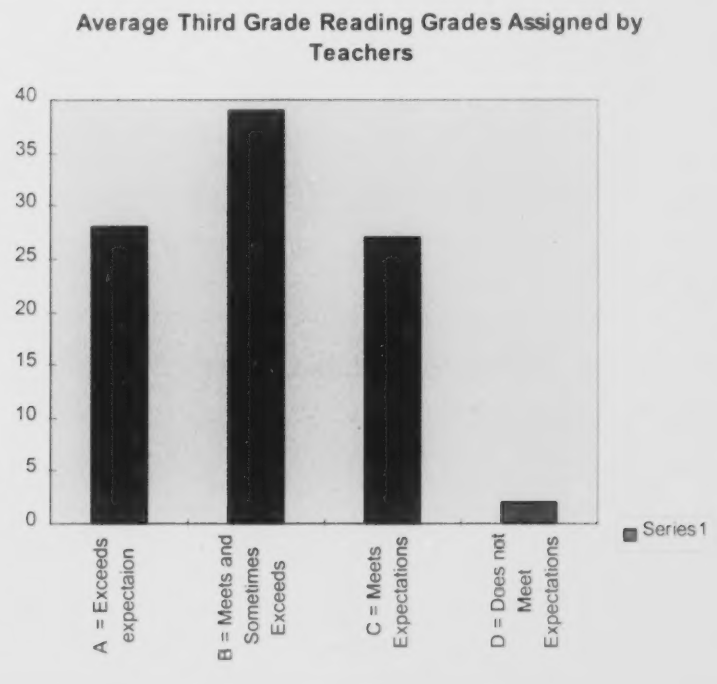
1997-1998 IGAP Scores, Third Grade At Targeted Site

Subject Tested	Does not Meet State Standards	Meets State Standards	Exceeds State Standards
Reading	22	54	20
Mathematics	4	64	27
Writing	5	68	21

1997 - 1998 IGAP scores indicate that 54 students are meeting, 22 students are not meeting and 20 are exceeding state standards in reading. These statistics indicate, that according to state norms, many students at the targeted site are not reading at third grade level. However, even if accurate, this information, while indicating a deficiency, does not provide teachers and students with needed self-appraisal for improvement; nor, is the information individualized. While the statistics indicate a problem, the information is inadequate for designing appropriate instructional strategies to remedy the deficiencies. An anecdotal instance, provided by teacher A, is of a case of pupil A who had good comprehension skills but had difficulty with decoding and word attack. A teacher perceived problem is that specific IGAP tests vary each year and do not examine what is taught in a particular class, at a particular site. Further, standardized tests, such as IGAP, provide a one-time indicator but not a formative appraisal of student performance.

Figure: 2

Average Reading Grade, Determined By Third Grade Teachers, 1997-98



The above graph, figure 2, indicates that according to teachers' assessments at the targeted site, 28 students received As, exceeding school expectations in reading, 39 received Bs which meant they sometimes exceeded, and 27 students received Cs which means performing at school expectations. Two students, who were not English-speaking, were not given letter grades. It should be noted that there is a major discrepancy in reporting of reading assessments by IGAP and the school site. Other than the two non-English speaking students, all students at the school site, according to the school's

reporting mechanism, met expectations. Teacher-determined grades at the site are based on multiple forms of assessment such as student performance, teacher observation, projects, written work, and students' daily assignments. They are long term, longitudinal, forms of assessment that are formative in suggesting use of various instructional strategies. These grades reflect the site's curriculum and reflect daily assignments. The IGAP is not modified, with the exception of IEP stated modifications for exceptions. Teachers and parents may be confused by the differences between the two approaches to assessments and the discrepancy in reporting students' achievement in reading.

The following figures are based on the Parent Survey on Assessment , completed by parents of first and third grade students in targeted rooms at the site in the 1998-99 school year (See Appendix B and Appendix C).

Figure 3

Parent Survey On Assessment, First And Third Grade, 1998-1999 School Year.

Survey Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Students are able to judge their own work	0	12	16	3
Standardized test show a clear reflection of child's abilities	0	12	17	2
Who should set academic goals for students'	Teacher 0	Parent Teacher 8	Teacher, Parent ,Child 23	Teacher Student 0

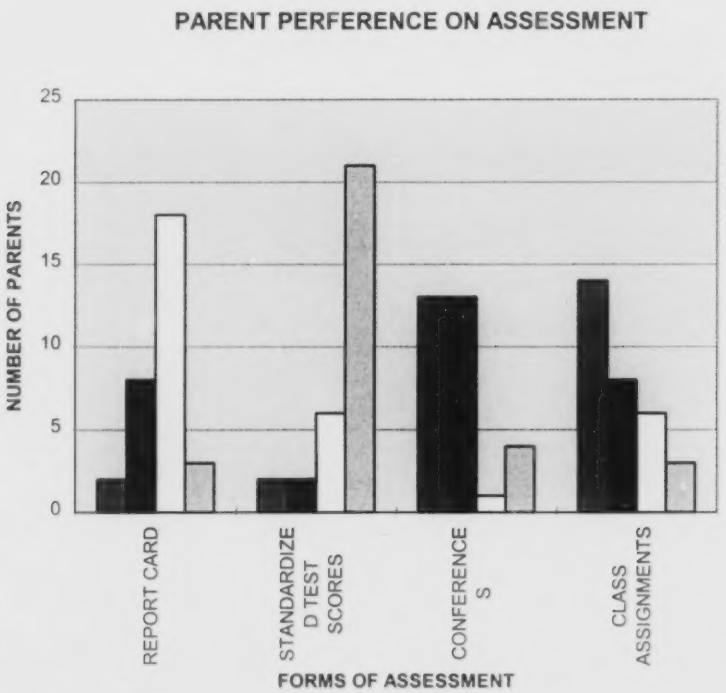
The survey results indicated prior show that 51 percent agree and 10 percent strongly agree that their child can judge his/her own work. Thirty-nine percent of parents believe their child is unable to judge their own work. These statistics show that the majority of parents believe their children can contribute to the assessment process. However, neither that IGAP scores, nor the school site's assessment process, provides for pupil input. The 39 percent of parents who believe that their children cannot assess their performance may also suggest that the school has not prepared students to engage in self-assessment.

Thirty-nine percent of parents disagree that standardized tests are a clear reflection of children's ability. Fifty-five percent agree and six percent strongly agree that standardized tests show a clear reflection of their ability. It is striking that 61 percent believe in the adequacy of standardized tests to accurately reflect children's ability and the same percentage also supports their children's participation in the assessment process. This suggests that an alternative or an additional means of assessment such as portfolios might bridge the gap.

Seventy-four percent of respondents favored student, teacher, and parent collaboration in establishing students learning goals. Twenty-six percent believed that parents and teachers should establish such goals. Zero percent favored only teachers set learning goals.

Figure 4

Assessments Ranked By Parents As Providing The Most Helpful Information About Their Child



The graph above indicates that 46 percent of parents ranked classroom assignments as providing the most useful information about their children's academic progress. Forty-two percent found conferences most helpful. Six percent found reports cards and 6 percent found standardized tests provided the most helpful information. Sixty-seven percent found that standardized tests provided the least helpful information about their children's academic achievement, 13 percent found teacher-parent conferences, 10 percent report

cards and 10 percent classroom assignments to be the least helpful. The evidence from this finding suggests that the assessment process presently used does not provide for including multiple sources of helpful information.

PROBABLE CAUSES

Part II on probable causes examines the evidence in part I to identify and analyze probable causes. The evidence noted in part one, especially the discrepancy between IGAP reading scores and site assessment, suggests the need for individualized assessments. The state mandated assessment indicates broad percentages but does not identify specific problems of individual pupils. This causes broad comparisons of classes within a school and even between school districts but does not address the specific problems and needs of individual children.

IGAP scores may suggest a problem, in this case reading deficits by a category of students, but does not provided sufficient information to remedy the deficiency. Portfolio assessment, in contrast, enables teachers, parents, and students to cooperatively identify problems, set goals, and develop shared strategies for remediation.

The discrepancy noted between IGAP scores and teacher assigned grades at the site suggests another dimension to the problem. Although both are measuring reading skills, the IGAP scores indicate that 22 students are not meeting state reading expectations, in contrast, the teacher assigned scores

indicates that all but two students are meeting reading expectations. The difference between the IGAP and the site in indicating levels of reading skills is highly incongruent and a source of confusion to parents, and perhaps to the public. There is a major problem in interpreting reading scores. Neither of these forms of assessment provides for parent or student input and participation in the process. The portfolio assessment approach presents a means of narrowing the gap between these scores and provides an ongoing, formative, and meaningful means of assessment.

The parent survey (Appendix B) results on student participation in assessment show that the majority of parents, 61 percent, believe that students can self evaluate their own work. However, the school site process and method of reporting student achievement do not provide for such student participation. The use of portfolio assessment would, however, provide for student involvement, which the majority of parents believe is a feasible addition to the process.

The parent survey indicates that 61 percent of parents feel that standardized tests accurately reflected children's ability and that the same percentage also believe that children can effectively participate in the assessment process. Portfolio assessment, while not resolving this discrepancy, does provide a broader and more inclusive means of assessment.

The parents surveyed believe overwhelmingly in joint goal setting by teachers, parents, and students. Traditional assessment, such as IGAP and report cards, fails to provide opportunities for collaborative goal setting such as that

provided by portfolios. A collaborative approach helps to make goals individualized according to pupil needs.

The parent survey show that parents found teacher conferences and classroom assignments to be the most helpful in providing information about their child's ability. They find standardized tests and report cards to be the least helpful. The survey points to a problem regarding the reporting mechanism used at the site. Teacher conferences and classroom assignments are an ongoing part of the formative portfolio process. It can be assumed that the traditional means of reporting assessment by standardized tests scores and report cards lack sufficient meaning for parents.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE RELATED TO THE PROBLEM

The review of the literature in relationship to the problem suggests several underlying causes for the weaknesses in measuring students' academic growth through formal and standardized tests in reading and writing. Stowell and Tierney (1995) provide a background treatment of the recent educational reforms arising from criticism of traditional assessment of student literacy learning. The reform involves experimentation with more "authentic" strategies of assessment that challenge the conventional group administered standardized reading achievement test. Specifically, they argue that traditional tests are unreliable in judging a student's reading development because they measure too limited a range of literacy activity. Further, such tests discourage children whose scores indicate a reading deficit. Portfolios as an assessment tool, in contrast, are grounded in

classroom practices and encourage collaborative evaluation procedures (Stowell & Tierney, 1995).

Standardized tests are norm-referenced according to the performance of sample populations. Standardized tests are used to classify and rank students according to achievement from high to low. They interpret a student's performance by comparing it with other students. "Standardized tests are used to rank rather than improve schools, and sort rather than educate children' (Supovitz & Brennan, 1997, p.176). As noted in the problem at the site, IGAP scores are a standardized means of categorizing and ranking groups of students. Because of the broad general categorizing, they do not focus on individual needs.

Related to the problem identified at the site, Smith and Stevenson (1992) contend that the quality of education provided is more important than the type of assessment used . They argue that the evaluation requirements for federal programs such as Chapter 1 and Title VII over emphasize standardized, norm-referenced tests as indicators of academic success. The amount of testing takes away from time for instruction. While standardized tests, they say, provide information about recall of facts, they do not provide a clear picture of other kinds of learning, such as higher order thinking skills. They conclude that norm-referenced and authentic assessment, such as portfolio assessment, should compliment each other. Together, they provide a more complete picture about a student's knowledge of factual content as well as problem solving and higher order skills (Smith & Stevenson, 1991).

The literature generally supports the argument about the limitations of standardized tests in that they stress isolated facts and skills and only measure general knowledge. Traditional tests focus on lower level thinking skills, while ignoring critical thinking. According to Gardner (cited in Brualdi, 1996, p.3), children do not all learn in the same way, therefore, can not be assessed in a uniform way. Evidence at the site indicates that teachers and parents would like to have multiple indicators of student performance, collected over time, rather than one single test.

Taylor and Walton (1997), using a constructivist approach related to whole language learning, question the adequacy of using norm-referenced, multiple choice tests to assess student learning. They contend that in many schools across the country a constructivist oriented curriculum is being used in which students create their own knowledge base through collaborative interactions in the learning environment. Assessment practices need to keep pace with changes in curriculum and instruction. They conclude that performing successfully on norm-referenced tests is not the ultimate measure of learning and that assessment should relate to all the ways in which students learn in schools (Taylor and Walton, 1997).

Discrepancy between classroom performance and test scores is often seen as a problem in the classroom. Traditional tests do not encourage the development of lifelong skills and testing does not allow for students to assess their own work (Cole, Ryan & Kick 1995). According to Cole, Ryan and Kick (1995), current available state and national tests produce shallow and unreliable pictures of student achievement. They do not correlate with student performance

and abilities. The discrepancy between IGAP scores and teacher determined report cards at the site supports this issue which is identified in the literature.

Another problem with standardized testing is its administration takes time away from instruction. As a result of the importance placed on standardized scores, instruction and curriculum become test driven (Ornstein, 1993). Preparing students for standardized tests is very time consuming and takes away from the curriculum. When teachers teach to the test, authenticity of test scores is reduced.

Standardized tests have a negative effect on student behavior. When students hear the word "test" they experience stress and anxiety. Not all students perform well on tests. There are numerous behaviors that negatively affect student performance on tests: fatigue, boredom, and learning disabilities (Micklo, 1997).

The literature also suggests that standardized tests reduce student ownership and pride in their work. Both teachers and students often realize after the test, when it is too late, that students did not understand the lessons (Stix & Morse, 1996). Students are not involved in assessing and evaluating their own work. There is little connection between test scores and student's ability in classroom performance. Also, standardized tests are a summative rather than formative means of evaluation. Similar to the literature, evidence collected at the site indicated that 61 percent of parents favored student participation in the assessment process. Students' participation in the process would reveal the pupil's problems, issues, and successes.

Among the adverse effects of standardized tests is that they do not include students' diverse backgrounds and experiences into the assessment process.

Minority and low-income students repeatedly perform worse on standardized tests (Supovitz & Brennan, 1997). Standardized tests can not measure full student potential and growth.

In summary, standardized tests have the following weakness:

1. They sort and rank children rather than improve learning.
2. They rest on the assumption that all children can be assessed uniformly.
3. They develop few skills that transfer to life situations.
4. They make instruction test driven.
5. They produce anxiety among students.
6. They ignore cultural differences.

Evidence collected at the site that demonstrated the existence of a problem on means of assessment and reporting students achievement to parents suggests that standardized tests have only limited meaning to those involved in the educational process. It also suggests that teachers, parents, and students would prefer more accurate, meaningful, and useful kinds of assessments, especially that which includes multiple indicators. The review of the literature supports the site findings and suggests some deeper understandings of portfolios and alternative assessment.

CHAPTER 3

THE SOLUTION STRATEGY

Literature Review

The literature review suggests that the implementation of portfolio assessment will provide a more accurate and meaningful measure of student academic growth and performance than conventional modes of assessment such as standardized tests. Belanoff provides a useful introductory discussion about the current popularity of portfolio assessment. Though primarily concerned with the use of portfolios in higher education, Belanoff (1994) examines the context of the national movement for use of portfolios. She finds portfolios are being used in a wide range of sites and fields: inner city and suburban school districts, state education departments, and in professional programs, including teacher education and certification. She points out that there are two conflicting trends at work on the national scene: the growing interest in using portfolios and a pressure for mandated national standardized testing. She concludes that portfolios are not a "cure-all" but "a way of integrating testing, teaching, and curriculum" (Belanoff, 1994).

In the general discussion of portfolios as a form of alternative assessment, White argues that the federal Department of Education should support the development of a wide sample of portfolios for different kinds of students rather than focus on standardized test development. A strong advocate of portfolio assessment, White claims that they provide a view of student learning that is "active, engaged, and dynamic," in contrast to passive standardized test assessment (White, 1994, p. 27).

Like other proponents of alternative assessment, White contends the portfolios can integrate teaching, learning, and assessment. She finds an important strength of portfolio assessment is that it is a process open to revision. She comments, however that portfolio assessment is in its very early stages of development rather than a finished tool of assessment.

An important part of the literature review was to establish a definition of a portfolio from representative works in the field. Grace and Shores (1998) provides a useful definition of a portfolio. He defines a portfolio as a purposeful collection of a student's work that exhibits efforts and achievement in multiple areas. It is a cumulative and formative record of a student's process of learning showing both the content and process of learning. Micklo (1997) concurs that portfolios provide teachers with formative information about student's progress, thought processes, achievements, and needs. Young, Mathews, Kietzmann and Westerfield (1997) elaborate further on the definition of portfolios, referring to them as collections of students' work artifacts that are selected by students and teachers to represent students' efforts, achievement, and progress over time.

While the preceding definitions linked portfolios and assessment, Vavrus clearly added the important elements of system and organization to the process of collecting students' work pieces in a portfolio. They define portfolios as a systematic and organized collection of evidence by teachers and students to monitor the growth of a student's knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Cole, Ryan & Kick, 1995). The concept of monitoring as an observation of progress links the idea of portfolio use with the process of assessment.

In a study of portfolio assessment Supovitz and Brennan (1997) found portfolios provide a deliberate collection of student and teacher selected work that reflects student's abilities, performance, and achievement over a period of time. A form of authentic assessment, portfolio assessment is ongoing, continuous and cumulative and reflects student's individual growth. Portfolio assessment provides classroom teachers with the insight into individual learning styles of each student .

Valencia (1990) also makes a strong argument for using portfolios in teaching and assessing reading. She argues that students read a variety of materials and that assessment to be authentic should also be multidimensional. Since reading is a continuous process, assessment should be formative, continuous, and ongoing. She concludes that portfolios provide a multi-dimensional, continuous, and collaborative means of assessment.

There are two types of portfolio assessment: process and product. In a process portfolio, students use the portfolio as a growth instrument. It demonstrates student performance at the beginning of a task, progress in performing, and mastery of the task. The second type is the product portfolio which reflects student's performance at the end of a unit or end of the school year. A summative form of assessment, it illustrates students abilities and includes teacher observations of student performance (Cole, Ryan & Kick, 1995).

The literature points to numerous benefits in using portfolio assessment in the classroom. According to Gillespie (1997), the major advantage of portfolio assessment over traditional assessment is the active involvement of the students in their own evaluations. Students develop ownership and responsibility in their work through

selection of pieces and self evaluation for their portfolio. While traditional forms of assessment aim at ranking students in comparison to each other, portfolios can strengthen self-esteem and pride by showing what students can do (cited in Winograd, 1994).

Also, relating to the development of student's self-esteem and sense of ownership, Wolf (1989) contends that too much school-based assessment is counter productive in that it prevents students from learning to be thoughtful judges of their own work . When students maintain portfolios of their own work, they learn to assess their own progress as learners. Also, teachers gain a larger and more useful perspective on their own successes and areas of needed improvement in their own teaching. Like a biography, the use of portfolios in language arts engages students in constructing their own long term account of their educational education progress, their own story.

Portfolios create a whole cumulative picture of each individual child's progress. They gives a broader picture of what a student can do over a long period of time under multiple and varying circumstances. Classroom work is documented over time and growth is recorded in several content areas. Portfolios include multiple means of assessing students. "Teachers are able to evaluate individual students through the actual classroom artifacts, formal and nontraditional entries. The portfolio will include a full range of cognitive skills rather than one illustration of academic performance" (Cole, Ryan & Kick, 1995, p. 10). Social skills, learning styles, and study skills are included in the portfolio through reflections, anecdotal records, parent surveys, and student surveys. Other pieces include artifacts of student progress, student and teacher selected work pieces, interest inventories, running records, and growth samples.

Lockledge (1997) concurs with the general interpretation of portfolios as providing students with the opportunity to select the work that they have done over a period of time that has contributed to their learning. His opinion is part of the general thinking in the literature that the selective process in creating a portfolio is an ongoing learning experience.

Portfolios incorporate multiple people into the assessment process. Students, teachers, and parents are included in the selection and evaluation process. Portfolios can provide important information to teachers, counselors, school psychologists and administrators regarding a child's performance over time rather than just isolated fragments (Cole, Ryan & Kick, 1995, p.35).

Portfolio assessment provides academic and curricular benefits for students. Teachers can create a curriculum that meets the individual needs of each student. "Portfolios as an alternative assessment tool can lead teachers to incorporate a variety of methods to diagnose students whose learning styles may not fit standardized testing (Supovitz & Brennan, 1997, p. 177).

Emphasis is placed on self reflection and understanding rather than fact recall. Portfolios reflect problem solving, critical thinking and real life applications. Multiple samples of student work are collected to give a broader in-depth look at what students know and can do. It gives an alternative to a single test score and teachers can communicate student progress more accurately and meaningfully to parents.

The development of student self esteem on pride of ownership is also stressed by Winograd (1994). Without fear of being ranked comparatively, students feel greater freedom in using portfolios as part of the assessment process. They provide students

with systematic and continuing opportunities to gain ownership and insight into their own learning. Wiedmeir (1998) adds that a benefit in using portfolios is to involve students in their own selection and design processes.

While most of the literature is highly favorable of using portfolios, Maeroff (1991) takes a realistic and occasionally critical view of the movement to devise and implement alternative assessment strategies, including the popular use of portfolios. Recognizing the need to develop alternatives to standardized tests, Maeroff, raised some cautionary reservations about portfolios and other alternatives forms of assessment. Maeroff notes that the alternative assessment approach is a national movement, with forty states have such plans in place. The major problem facing education is "to devise methods of assessing students that can provide useful information while avoiding the shortcomings associated with norm referenced tests" (Maeroff, 1991, p. 274). Maeroff comments on the Rhode Island pilot projects, "Outcomes for third Graders," which relied primarily on portfolios. He notes the complications and difficulties encountered. As a supplement to standardized norm referenced testing, alternative strategies such as portfolios will need to "be done more quickly, more efficiently, and less expensively than at first seems possible" (Maeroff, 1991, p. 275). He also points out that alternative assessment should involve manipulation for computer modes. He indicates the need to make portfolio assessment less subjective. There are, he states, "no quick and easy ways to rate large numbers of performance based tasks or portfolios..." (Maeroff, 1991, p. 275). His most important admonition is to connect assessment with instruction to avoid the separation that occurs in using commercially produced examinations.

Project Objectives and Processes

As a result of portfolio assessment during the period of September 1998 to January 1999, the targeted elementary classrooms will produce evidence of student's growth and development in language arts, as measured through, running records, interest surveys, anecdotal records and student reflections.

In order to accomplish the project objective, the following processes are necessary:

Students will complete a reading interest survey, designed to identify the student's interest in reading and writing.

Parents/Guardians will complete a student reading interest survey (Appendix D), which will provide information about their child's strengths and weaknesses in reading and writing as well as their interests.

Running records, compiled by the teacher, will be used to show individual progress and growth in the area of reading, in first grade only.

Anecdotal records will record teacher observation of student performance and interest in reading and writing.

Checklists of reading skills, compiled by the teacher, will show the developmental stage in the area of reading.

Checklists of writing skills, compiled by the teacher, will show the developmental stage in the area of writing.

A reader's log, maintained by the students, that records the titles and authors of books read by the student.

Student samples of work, selected by students and teachers, in reading and writing.

Student reflections and journals, daily writing by students.

Project Action Plan

Week One:

Informational letter describing portfolios will be sent home to parents (Appendix E).

Parent survey will be sent home to gather information about child's reading abilities (Appendix D).

Reading Interest survey, completed by students, will be given to show student's interest in reading.

Collection of Base Line Data will be completed. Data will include writing samples, developmental spelling tests, running records, fluency tests, and letter identification inventory.

Week Two:

Introduce and show examples of portfolios to the students.

Students will decorate folders that reflect their interests.

Students will write or draw a reflection to show how they feel about reading and writing.

Teachers begin keeping anecdotal records.

Parents will attend Curriculum Night where portfolios will be introduced.

Parents will be invited to attend a Portfolio Information Night.

Week Three:

Students will select two work samples to be put in portfolio.

Students will learn how to tag pieces and reflect on them.

Introduce students to peer conferences (Appendix F). Students will share their pieces and write a reflection.

Portfolio Information Night-Detailed information about portfolios will be presented to parents followed by a question-answer session.

Continue anecdotal records.

Week Four:

Teachers introduce rubrics to evaluate their work.

Students select a work sample and complete a rubric.

Teachers begin using checklist to assess participation in Junior Great Books and have students write a reflection on their participation.

Students begin keeping reader's log to record independent reading throughout the twelve weeks.

Students will set goals for reading and writing.

Continue anecdotal records.

Week Five:

Students will select one item to be sent home for a parent-student conference.

Begin teacher-student conferences. Students will share portfolios and teachers will respond (Appendix G)

Students will do a peer evaluation using a rubric.

Students will select and tag a work sample.

Continue anecdotal records.

Begin to use checklist to evaluate reading and writing checklist.

Week Six:

Classroom A and classroom B classes will share portfolios and complete a reflection.

Select and tag items.

Continue checklists.

Continue anecdotal records.

Continue student-teacher conferences.

Week Seven:

Classroom A will share portfolios with Principal (Appendix H)

Classroom B will share portfolios with Assistant Principal (Appendix H)

Select and tag items.

Continue checklists.

Continue anecdotal records.

Continue student-teacher conferences.

Week Eight:

Select and tag items.

Continue checklists.

Continue anecdotal records.

Portfolios will be shared with parents at parent-teacher Conferences.

Continue student-teacher conferences.

Week Nine:

Students will take portfolios home for parent-student conference (Appendix I).

Select and tag items.

Continue checklists.

Continue anecdotal records.

Continue student-teacher conferences.

Week Ten:

Students will make a table of contents. First graders will complete task with a third grade partner.

Students will evaluate their own portfolio (Appendix J)

Complete running records.

Give fluency test to third grade students.

Week Eleven:

Portfolio Celebration Night! Students will share their portfolios with their parents. Parents will use a form to guide them in the discussion with their child. Parent and child will complete an evaluation.

Students will complete the reading interest survey.

Students will be given developmental spelling test.

Week Twelve:

Parents will complete survey evaluating the use of portfolios (Appendix K).

Students will complete survey evaluating the use of portfolios (Appendix L).

Students will revisit goals and make adjustments.

Methods of Assessment

In order to assess the effects of the intervention, rubrics, student-surveys, parent-surveys, running records, fluency tests, and informal reading inventories will be developed. In addition, portfolios of student work in language arts will be kept throughout the intervention period.

Chapter Four

Project Results

HISTORICAL DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERVENTION

The intervention used portfolio assessment as an additional mode of assessment in classroom A and classroom B of the targeted site. The working assumption underlying the intervention was that standardized and traditional means of assessment lacked sufficient meaning in interpreting and guiding student learning. Specifically, the project objective was, "as a result of portfolio assessment during the period of September 1998 to January 1999, the targeted elementary classrooms will produce evidence of students' growth and development in language arts, measured through running records, interest surveys, anecdotal records and student reflections."

The teacher researchers identified portfolio assessment as their subject in May 1998. A review of the literature on assessment and portfolios was undertaken in summer 1998, at the onset of the project to define the problem and describe intervention strategies.

The general chronology of the intervention follows. In September 1998, the teachers collected base line data such as fluency tests, anecdotal notes, and reading inventories. The students were given reading surveys in September 1998 to establish student strengths, weaknesses, and interests. At this time, parents

completed a survey about assessment to elicit their opinions about assessments used at the target site.

The process of introducing student portfolios began in the last week of September 1998 and continued throughout the intervention. The teacher researchers decided not to administer a pre assessment survey to students about portfolios since none of the students had familiarity with or knowledge of portfolios. Rather than giving a formal paper and pencil survey to familiarize students with the portfolio concept, an in class informal conversation and discussion. The process was then advanced by having the students decorate their individual portfolios to establish a-sense of ownership. At the site's curriculum night on September 15, 1998, parents were introduced to portfolio assessment to familiarize them with the underlying philosophy, process, and purpose. Students began selecting pieces to include in their portfolios.

The teacher researchers began interviewing students in mid October to elicit their opinions of their reading and writing abilities and to establish learning goals in the area of reading. Concurrently, students collected some of their work and began to organize their portfolios by creating a table of contents, section headings. This involved tagging their work to show what they judged to be their best work, what they liked, and what they disliked about it.

The students conferenced with the teacher at the end of October, with the principal or assistant principal during the first two weeks of November, and with a peer in early November, to reflect on work of which they were proud, to determine areas of improvement, and to refine their goals. Students participated in teacher-

parent conferences during the third and fourth week of November, using their own portfolio as the focus of discussion. Each week during the rest of the intervention, students continued to add pieces and their reflections on them to their portfolio.

During the intervention, the teacher researchers conducted fluency tests in classroom A during September and January, star tests in classroom A during November and January, reading logs on an ongoing basis, informal reading inventories in November in classroom A, and running records in October in classroom B. The results were collected and placed in the student's portfolios.

Evidence from the site, such as IGAP scores from 1997-98 and cumulative reading scores for 1997-98 for third grade were reviewed and tabulated to demonstrate evidence of a problem of inconsistency between scores and grades. At the time of this writing, IGAP, now called ISAT, scores were not available.

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

A survey of parents, " Parent Post Assessment Survey (Appendix L)" and a survey of students, "Student Post Assessment Survey (Appendix M)" were both administered and their results were tabulated in February 1999. The researchers' intention in developing and administering the parent survey was to determine the parents' opinions of using portfolios as a means of assessment. The student survey was designed to determine if students found portfolios valuable in their learning experience and to determine if they had developed skills in self evaluation of their work. Researchers decided to administer the Student Post Assessment Survey to determine if, after having experience in using portfolios, the students wanted to be included in the assessment process and to ascertain their

opinions of the intervention. In the following sections, the parents' surveys will be analyzed. This will be followed by an analysis of the student surveys.

The Parent Post Assessment Survey was administered to 24 parents in classroom A. Nineteen parents completed and returned the survey.

Figure : 5

Classroom A Parent Post Assessment Survey

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My Child enjoyed using portfolios in the classroom	4 21%	14 74%	1 5%	0 0%
Portfolios show progress better than a test score	2 11%	14 73%	3 16%	0 0%
Portfolios helped your child see his/her growth and development	11 58%	8 42%	0 0%	0 0%
My child can self evaluate and judge his/her work as a result of portfolios	9 47%	10 53%	0 0%	0 0%
Portfolios help me understand my child's academic ability	8 44%	10 56%	0 0%	0 0%

Parents' responses strongly indicate that they perceived their child as enjoying the use of portfolios in the classroom (21 % strongly agreed, 74% agreed, and 5% disagreed) and that they believed portfolios to be a better indicator of their child's academic progress than test scores (11% strongly agreed, 73% agreed, and 16% disagree). In the parents' pre survey, (third grade only (Appendix A), 35% disagreed that standardized tests provide an accurate assessment of their child's academic ability; 53% agreed and 12% strongly agreed that they did provide an accurate assessment. In the pre survey, 6% strongly agreed, 47% agreed, and 47% disagreed that tests provide an accurate assessment of their child's performance in school. Five percent believed that standardized tests did not accurately reflect students' academic ability and 53% agreed that standardized tests accurately reflected students' academic ability. In contrast, the post test finding showed an important shift in the parents' opinions. They now regard portfolio assessment to have greater accuracy. These findings correspond with teachers A's opinion that students enjoy and are capable of being part of the assessment process. It also confirms the teachers' opinion that standardized test scores alone, such as ISAT, do not specifically tell parents what their child can do and cannot do. Test scores only provide a ranking and not a clear indication of skills attained or lacking. Portfolios provide a more extensive indication of a child's academic progress.

On the parents' post survey, 58% strongly agreed and 42% agreed that portfolios helped their child to see his or her growth and development . On the pre survey, 24% strongly agreed and 76% agreed that teacher graded tests

and assignments gave children a clear understanding of their academic strengths and weaknesses. Although these responses deal with somewhat different aspects of parental understanding, the findings on the post test indicate recognition of the value of portfolio assessment. Comments from parents in the section on strengths of portfolios were: "being able to visually see progress and compare work to older assignments," "You look back and see progress from their point of view," "provides a glimpse of student work over time," "Portfolios are a very important source to learn about their child's progress. " These comments support the view that portfolio assessment, unlike grades or test scores, enable parents to see their child's growth and development over time.

On the post survey, 47% of parents strongly agreed and 53% agreed that their child could self evaluate and judge their work as a result of portfolios; none of the parents disagreed. On the pre survey in responding to the item: "My child is able to self-evaluate and judge their work," 18% of parents strongly agreed, 47% agreed, and 35% disagreed. The post survey showed a significant shift in parental opinion. The findings indicate that parents believe that portfolios gave their children an opportunity at self assessment. Parental comments included, "It's nice to know what the kids think of their work ." This finding corresponds to the teachers' belief that portfolios enabled students to think about the quality of their own work, knowing why they liked it, and how they needed to improve. This reinforces the generalizations in the review of the literature that portfolios increase students' metacognition, and gives them a sense of ownership of their work.

Parental responses to the statement: "Portfolios help me understand my child's progress," were: 44% strongly agreed, and 56% agreed, with no respondents disagreeing. There are no items on the pre survey that correspond to this statement. Parental statements on the post survey included the following: "I see how my child progresses from the start of the year to the end." "Everyday work is included." "There is a variety of work covered and I'm able to see what is covered this year." "They show improvement from beginning to end which is encouraging."

The strongest conclusions that can be deduced from the parent's post survey are the following: 1. Parents see student growth and development over time. 2. Parents believe that portfolios help their child to self-evaluate his or her own work. 3. Parents believe portfolios provide a better understanding of their child's academic abilities. In other words, parents responded positively to all of the questions regarding portfolios on the post survey.

There were some parents who identified weaknesses in the use of portfolios in the classroom. Among those noted were: "They really are graded." "Sometimes there is not enough information in the section." and "Kids need to add more of their papers and the papers need dates on them." The strongest negative statement came from a respondent who believed that the portfolios were actually graded. However, the portfolio, itself, was not graded in the third grade class though some of the tests and assignments were graded by the teacher. Most of the negative comments were really suggestions for improving the management and organization of the portfolio process.

A post assessment survey was also distributed and completed by the students in classroom A in February. Its purpose was to elicit student reactions to the portfolio experience which was a new element in their education. The results follow in the next section.

Figure: 6

Classroom A Student Post Assessment Survey

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I enjoyed keeping a portfolio this year	9 38%	14 58%	1 4%	0 0%
I enjoyed conferencing with the Principal or Assistant Principal	3 13%	19 79%	2 8%	0 0%
I enjoyed conferencing with my teacher about my portfolio	5 21%	19 79%	0 0%	0 0%
I enjoyed conferencing with a peer about my portfolio	10 42%	11 46%	3 13%	0 0%
I enjoyed conferencing with my parents about my portfolio	9 38%	14 58%	1 4%	0 0%
My portfolio helps me to see my academic progress	9 38%	15 62%	0 0%	0 0%

I can self evaluate my work.	5 21%	18 75%	0 0%	1 4%
I am proud of the work that is in my portfolio	11 46%	12 50%	1 4%	0 0%
I think my portfolio shows my strengths and weaknesses better than a test score.	8 33%	8 33%	9 38%	0 0%
I liked creating my own academic goals	12 50%	12 50%	0 0%	0 0%
I feel I can achieve the goals I set.	9 38%	15 62%	0 0%	0 0%
I liked being part of the parent teacher conferences.	4 17%	20 83%	0 0%	0 0%

The majority of students enjoyed keeping a portfolio and also enjoyed conferencing with the principals, teacher, parents and peers about their portfolios. The most noticeable deviation was that 13% did not find conferencing with peers enjoyable. This may relate to a lack of confidence and prior experience in discussing their academic work with peers.

Questions that dealt with the use of portfolios in self assessment also gained a positive response. This positive response correlates with a similar attitude shown in the parent survey regarding the use of portfolios as a tool of

self evaluation. Initially, a number of parents felt that their children could not self evaluate.

An important qualification was that 38% of students disagreed that portfolios showed strengths and weaknesses better than test scores. This may be an indication of the students' belief in the importance of test scores and grades. Their prior experience with letter grades was that an A grade meant that they knew the subject. Nevertheless, portfolios indicate a degree of skill and knowledge on an ongoing continuum. Further, students are still in a system in which they are assigned grades and get report cards. It should be noted that the parents' responses generally agreed that portfolios provided more information about academic progress than test scores.

Responses to questions related to setting and achieving goals strongly affirmed the use of portfolios. There were no negative responses regarding goal setting. Students strongly affirmed using portfolios for setting and achieving goals. These responses affirm a strength of portfolios, also cited in the literature review, that they engage students in their own learning, especially in setting learning goals.

Student responses indicate that they enjoyed being participants in the teacher-parent conferences. This finding corresponded with parents' favorable response to having their children participate in teacher-parent conferences. Parents commented that such conferencing provided substantial information about their child's academic progress

Among the comments students made to the question: "What are some things that you liked about keeping a portfolio?" were: "It's fun to see what I improved in." "I like to see all the things that I did in a year." "I like looking back and seeing what I did." "It keeps my test scores." These student comments emphasized that the portfolios gave them the opportunity to look back and see their work over time and to recognize their progress.

Responses to the question: " What are some things that you did not like about keeping a portfolio?" were: "It was hard to keep the portfolio organized." "that we can't bring it home more often and show our parents," "My bad stuff and embarrassing stuff is in it." " I don't like all the things I did in my portfolio." "It gets messy. " These responses refer to the mechanics of organization and management of the portfolio. Portfolios were kept in binders and there was some ripping of pages. It is important to establish a more manageable method of keeping student portfolios next year. In addition to the responses relating to management, the most important response was that students did not like all of the items in the portfolio. This may be due to the fact that the teacher selected some of the items in the portfolio. Perhaps the students would prefer to do more self selection.

Materials included in the portfolios were a star test which establishes reading level, informal reading inventories, fluency tests, accelerated reader tests, and work samples. These assessments provided a broader indication of student achievement and ability. However, it would be an overstatement to say that reading ability improved as a result of the use of portfolios. Using

portfolios showed that the broader range of evidence about a child's ability and achievement provides parents and the teacher with a more comprehensive perspective of a student's progress.

A parent post assessment survey was administered to 22 parents in classroom B. Fourteen surveys were returned.

Figure: 7

Parent Post Assessment Survey Classroom B

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My Child enjoyed using portfolios in the classroom	9 64%	4 29%	1 7%	0 0%
Portfolios show progress better than a test score	6 38%	6 38%	2 14%	0 0%
Portfolios helped your child see his/her growth and development	11 79%	2 14%	1 7%	0 0%
My child can self evaluate and judge his/her work as a result of portfolios	6 38%	7 50%	1 2%	0 0%
Portfolios help me understand my child's academic ability	7 38%	6 50%	1 2%	0 0%

The survey results indicate that 64% strongly agree, 29% agree, and 7% disagree that their child enjoyed using portfolios in the classroom. In the pre survey, 38% of the parents surveyed strongly agree that portfolios show more progress than a test score, 38% agree, and 14% disagree. In the post survey, 57% agree and 43 % disagree that test score results provide an accurate reflection of their child's academic abilities. The post survey shows that parents' opinion of test scores has changed through the use of portfolio assessment. They now understand that seeing their child's progress provides more information than just a test score.

On the parents' post survey, 79% strongly agree, 14% agree, and 7% disagreed that portfolios helped their child see his/her growth and development. Parent comments during the parent-child conference included, "The portfolio allowed me, the researcher, to see how my child has improved since the beginning of the year." The portfolios also allowed me to see the growth and development of each individual child. Some students have progressed a lot more than others.

On the post survey, 38% strongly agree, 50% agree, and only 2% of parents disagree that their child could self evaluate and judge their work as a result of portfolios. On the pre test, 57% of the parents agree that their child was able to self evaluate and judge their work. The biggest discrepancy come on the pre test, where 43% of the parents disagreed that their child could self evaluate their work. Parent comments include, "I could not evaluate my work when I was in First grade," and "I enjoyed reading their self reflections." The researcher noticed that

some students went back and changed some of their "tagged" items that they thought was their best work.

Overall, the parent post assessment survey from classroom B indicated that the students enjoyed using portfolios in the classroom, parents saw growth and development throughout the intervention, and parents believe that their child can self evaluate and judge his/her work as a result of portfolios.

A student post assessment survey was completed by 22 students in classroom B.

Figure: 8

Student Post Assessment Survey Classroom B

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I enjoyed keeping a portfolio this year	19 86%	3 14%	0 0%	0 0%
I enjoyed conferencing with the Principal or Assistant Principal	17 77%	5 23%	0 0%	0 0%
I enjoyed conferencing with my teacher about my portfolio	20 91%	2 9%	0 0%	0 0%
I enjoyed conferencing with a peer about my portfolio	13 59%	7 31%	1 5%	1 5%

I enjoyed conferencing with my parents about my portfolio	21 95%	1 5%	0 0%	0 0%
My portfolio helps me to see my academic progress	16 73%	6 27%	0 0%	0 0%
I can self evaluate my work.	18 82%	4 18%	0 0%	0 0%
I am proud of the work that is in my portfolio	20 90%	1 5%	1 5%	0 0%
I think my portfolio shows my strengths and weaknesses better than a test score.	16 73%	6 27%	0 0%	0 0%
I liked creating my own academic goals	17 77%	5 23%	0 0%	0 0%
I feel I can achieve the goals I set.	18 82%	4 18%	0 0%	0 0%
I liked being part of the parent teacher conferences.	15 68%	5 23%	2 9%	0 0%

The survey results indicated that 100% of the students enjoyed keeping a portfolio this year. When comparing these results to the parent post

assessment survey, 93% of the parents also perceived their child to have enjoyed using portfolios in the classroom.

According to the survey, 100% of the students enjoyed conferencing with the principals and teacher about their portfolio. However, 5% disagree and 5% strongly disagree that they enjoyed conferencing with a peer. Student responses to that question were, "I did not like showing my work to someone else," and "There was a paper in my portfolio that I did not want to show anybody." The survey also indicated that students enjoyed being a part of parent-teacher conferences. One student commented, "I have never been to a parent-teacher conference. I got a chance to explain all of my work to my Mom and Dad." Parents also commented that they were happy to have their child involved in parent-teacher conferences. Overall, these results appear to show that students enjoyed being a part of all conferences.

All of the students surveyed felt that the portfolio helped them to see their academic progress. Students commented that they could not believe how much they have learned in First grade. Some were surprised at their work that they had done in the beginning of the year. When comparing the Parent Post Assessment Survey to the Student Survey, 79% strongly agree, 14% agree, and 7% disagree that their child was able to see his/her academic growth and development through the use a portfolio.

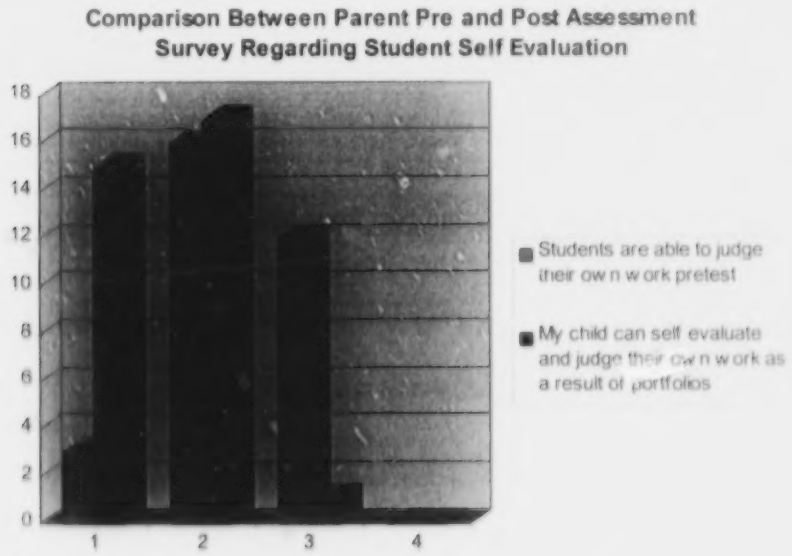
All of the students surveyed felt that they were able to self evaluate their work. Throughout the intervention, students chose pieces to put into the portfolio and self reflected on their work. Students commented that they were allowed to

choose pieces of their work for their portfolio. Parents also felt that their child was able to self evaluate his/her work as a result of portfolios.

An interesting comparative finding relates to parents' perceptions of their children's ability to self evaluate and judge his/her own work. In the parent preassessment survey, 14% of parents strongly agreed, 76% agreed, and 40% disagreed with the statement, "Students are able to judge their own work." On the parent post test, parents' response to the question, "My child can self evaluate and judge his/her work as a result of portfolios" was 45% strongly agreed, 52% agreed, and 3% disagreed. The highly important finding is that only 1 parent disagreed on the post survey. The graph below illustrates this finding.

Figure 9:

Comparison between parent pre and post survey regarding students' ability to self evaluate.



As a result of being involved as a participant in the assessment process along with their children, parents developed greater confidence in their children's ability to self evaluate their own work. The experience of using portfolios in evaluating and in conferencing demonstrated to parents that students can take a meaningful role in assessing their own work and progress. The interactions of parents, students, and teachers changed the initial perception of parents that their children had a limited ability to engage in self evaluation.

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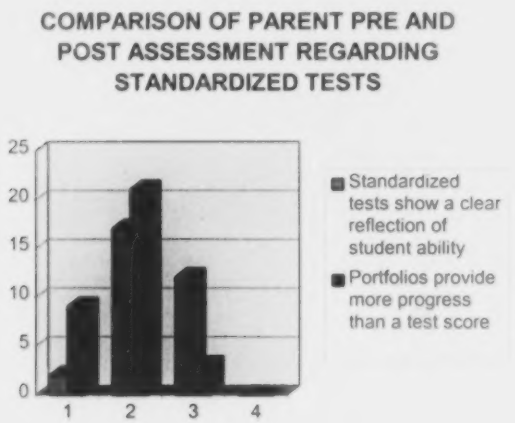
A second interesting finding relates to parents' perceptions regarding test scores and portfolios as instruments indicating students' academic abilities. On the parents' pre assessment survey, the response to the question: "Standardized tests show a clear reflection of a child's ability," was six per cent strongly agreed, 55% agreed, and 39% disagreed,. The responses of parents on the post assessment survey to the question, "Portfolios provide more indication of progress than a test score," was 27 % strongly agreed, 64% agreed, and 9% disagreed.

Figure: 10

Comparison between parent pre and post assessment survey regarding standardized tests.



Although these questions are somewhat different, we can conclude that parents find portfolio assessment to be a valid form of assessment. This agrees with the teachers' opinion that portfolio assessment is a good complement to standardized test scores and teacher determined grades. It might be

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concluded that portfolio assessment is not necessarily a replacement for standardized testing but in addition to standardized testing provides a more complete and on going type of formative assessment.

Implications

The following general patterns and trends were noted as a result of the intervention. These are discussed in terms of students , parents, and teachers.

Student surveys, interviews and conferences revealed that students were able to talk about their academic process and discuss their pieces, strengths, and weaknesses. Students gained facility in identifying and selecting appropriate reading material and were reading more than in the past. Teachers observed development of self esteem. Students wanted to place their work in portfolios; discussions became more meaningful as students developed more pride in their work. One student commented that he felt that he could read now, where last year he didn't know how. One trend observed was that students tended to learn from each other in developing their portfolios. At first, only a few students selected and placed pieces in their portfolios. When the other students observed them, they, too, joined in the process.

As a result of the intervention, affirmed in the parents post survey, parents developed a clearer understanding of their child's work and progress in reading. Parents appeared to enjoy having their child present at the teacher conference, to hear them discuss what he/she were reading. At the conference, the child often showed what they had accomplished rather than listening to an appraisal from the teacher. For children, parents, and teachers, review and

discussion about assessment was less threatening and more open ended. According to the post student assessment survey, all students enjoyed participating in the conferencing. However, it might be difficult to have the child present if a serious academic problem had to be discussed.

Both parents and students' seemed to enjoy taking the portfolio home and discussing the students work at home. They seemed to enjoy hearing their child talk about his/her work with them. The portfolios provide an opportunity to review a child's work which grades do not always provide. The parent post survey strongly reinforced the finding that parents enjoy seeing their child's academic progress over time. This correlated with the past student survey in which students commented that they enjoyed seeing their work over the course of the year. Both of these findings on the ongoing formative assessment value of portfolios are a strong argument in their favor.

The teacher researchers learned to recognize that much of the judging about what is good and successful can be done by pupils. This recognition of the teacher was strongly supported in both the parent and student post surveys. An increased number of parents came to believe that students could self evaluate their work. This finding was also true of students. All students believed that they were capable of self evaluations. They also recognized that the use of portfolios created greater responsibilities for students to become independent and self motivated learners. They recognized that planning and implementing an innovative strategy such as portfolio assessment requires careful prior planning and provision of sufficient time to implement it.

The pre intervention situation regarding reading assessment relied primarily on teacher assigned grades according to the school's reporting system. The grade was based on the teacher's appraisal of students' tests, assignments, projects, and participation. The impact of the IGAP standardized scores, following state norms, focused on the need to improve and on areas of remediation. It generated comparisons of schools both in and out of the district. There was little overall parent involvement in assessment.

Since students did not participate in their own assessment, there was minimal student self knowledge of reading expectations. The intervention, the post parent survey, and the post student survey all give strong support to portfolios as a useful introduction in assessment in the classroom. However, the results do not suggest, at this time, that portfolios can replace standardized tests and teacher assigned grades. Portfolios do provide a more accurate and meaningful ongoing, formative assessment of a child's academic progress.

In the pre intervention situation, students were given only a test score or letter grade that labeled and ranked them. Students were evaluated by outside means either meeting, exceeding or not meeting state standardized assessment norms. They were evaluated solely in comparison to group performance instead of on individual progress. Preintervention assessments did not provide self-assessment opportunities which encouraged them to learn by evaluating. In the pre intervention situation, students' thoughts and opinions were not included in the assessment process. Relying solely on letter grades as done at the site did not provide adequate evidence of student growth and development. Before the

implementation of portfolio based intervention, opportunities for discussion of student work with a variety of people such as peers, teachers, principal and parents was not formally provided. Prior to the intervention, individual goal setting by teacher, parent and students was not integrated into assessment. Parents were limited to parent teacher conferences to discuss their child's academic work. These conferences were led by the teacher, who used the report card as the basis of discussion. The teacher was the sole evaluator of the student's abilities. The use of portfolios, and conferencing related to them, opened up a great deal of discussion between the teacher, parents, and students which was not done prior to the intervention. The parent post survey and student post survey both affirmed that assessment, with portfolios, became more meaningful, accurate, and an opportunity for discussion.

Post intervention analysis revealed some important changes in teacher, parent, and student attitudes regarding assessment. It was interesting to observe students engaged in self appraisal, identifying their strengths and weaknesses. These observations provided insight into the child's reasoning process, attitude toward learning and school, and sense of self-esteem. Students were able to talk about their work, showing they understood the nature and purpose of an assignment. Many students were able to accurately identify their strengths and weaknesses. The teacher too became a learner, gaining insights about student progress and growth over time. Unlike the onetime snap shot picture of the preintervention situation, a more cumulative view of the child's learning was available. Students were able to show their work to a variety of people: their

peers, parents and principal, as well as the teacher. Students established individual goals. The portfolio approach, as the literature indicated, is an ongoing, working process rather than a one time event. Students were encouraged to express their opinions at interviews. The portfolio process did not categorize, rank , or grade students but rather individualized each student. At parent conferences, the teacher had actual student work to show to parents which demonstrated a child's strengths and weaknesses. Student participation in conferences provided students with the opportunity to refer to their reading sample. Student participation made the conference more collaborative than the traditional conference that merely had parents listening to a teacher's opinion of their child's progress. No longer did conferences focus on the letter grade but permitted parents to hear their own child discuss his or her learning. The discussion was more open in that students' work was self evaluated and the portfolio, itself, is non-graded and judged on its own merit, not in comparison to other students.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Generally, the intervention was judged to be very successful. The teachers felt they learned much more about their students by using portfolio assessment than they had learned in the past by reliance on standardized tests and teacher assigned grades. This intervention leads tot he following conclusions:

Conclusions

Multiple forms of assessment provide a broader picture of student ability than reliance on a single assessment format, such as letter grades, or standardized test scores.

- Through student involvement in setting goals, portfolio usage encourages a range of individualized learning options for students of varying interests, needs, and abilities.
- Portfolio usage encourages increased student and parent participation in the assessment process in that they provide students with self evaluation skills and parents with a more meaningful knowledge of their child's learning progress.
- Portfolio usage provides students with a greater sense of ownership of their work since they participate in the process of portfolio construction.
- IGAP, like other standardized tests, shows what students cannot do rather than what they can do. Portfolio usage provides a view of what students do accomplish over time.
- While IGAP scores and the school site mode of reporting by letter grades reveals incongruity, portfolio assessment is a means of personalizing and clarifying students' learning and achievement for themselves and for their parents.
- Because it is a participatory process, student involvement in portfolio assessment raises self esteem. In contrast, standardized tests which label or categorize a whole group, and letter grades tend to lower self esteem.

- Portfolios provide evidence of student growth and development over time whereas standardized tests provide a "snapshot" that is valid only at a given time.

Recommendations

As a result of the implementation of portfolios, the following is a list of recommendations:

- Teachers planning to use portfolios should carefully select the container and the format for maintaining the portfolio; this choice is important because it needs to meet teacher and student requirements.
- Teachers planning to use portfolio assessment must become knowledgeable about the philosophy of portfolio assessment before implementing it. They will want do an extensive review of the literature. The portfolio is not to be regarded as a mere container or a simple "addition" to conventional teaching.
- Teachers planning to use portfolios may want to survey the modes of assessment in place at their site; determine how portfolio assessment will relate to what is in place and how it may change conventional assessment.
- Teachers using portfolio assessment need to provide enough time for students to select pieces, reflect on them, tag them, and conference.
- Teachers need to spend time discussing portfolios with students,. They need to define portfolios and their purposes, and their relationship to appraising one's own work.

- Students need to have the experience of learning how to evaluate their own work-and finding ways to improve it.
- Students need opportunities to share their portfolios with peers, teachers, parents, and principal.
- Students need to have access to their portfolios. It is recommended that portfolios be visible and in reach of students.
- Parents need to be educated about the purpose of portfolios and involved in the process of using portfolios in their child's education.

The effect of the solution strategy was to provide an additional means of assessment to those existing rather than to replace them. The use of portfolio assessment provided a wider and broader range of assessment modes rather than reliance on or domination by a single mode. It incorporated more people, teachers, parents, and students, into the assessment process than either standardized tests or teacher determined grades.

We would recommend using portfolio assessment. We found it a successful intervention and recommend it to other teachers as a valuable part of assessment strategy. We wish to add, however, the following advice to those planning to implement portfolio assessment: think about how you will use portfolio assessment and how you will implement the actual process. Using portfolio assessment is worthwhile for the reasons stated in the conclusion. However, it is a more time intensive process than using letter grades. Prior planning and organization is needed to determine many items such as location of

portfolios in which students' work will be maintained, and how students will select pieces and items to be included.

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Appendices

Appendix A
Third Grade IGAP Scores 1997 – 1998

Subject Tested	Does not Meet State Standards	Meets State Standards	Exceeds State Standards
Reading	22	54	20
Mathematics	4	64	27
Writing	5	68	21

Appendix B
Parent Survey Regarding Assessment

Parent Survey

Dear Parents,

I am introducing portfolios as a student assessment tool. I am interested in your opinions regarding assessment of students growth and development. Please take a few minutes and fill out the following survey. I appreciate your help.

1. The school report card provides a clear understanding of my child's academic performance in school.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

2. Teacher graded tests and assignments provide me with a clear understanding of my academic performance in school.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

3. Teacher graded tests and assignments gives my child a clear understanding of their academic strengths and weaknesses.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

4. Who do you think should be involved in setting academic goals for your child?

Teacher	Parent and Teacher	Teacher, Parent and Student	Teacher and Student

5. My child is able to self evaluate and judge their own work.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

6. My child displays pride in their work.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

7. Standardized test results provide me with an accurate reflection of my child's academic abilities.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

8. My child's performance on tests accurately reflects their performance in school.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

9. My child feels confident taking tests.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

10. Which of the following provides you with the most helpful information about your child's academic abilities and school performance. Please rank by importance.

Report Card	Standardized Test Scores	Conferences with the teacher	Class Assignments

11. Additional Comments:

_____

_____

_____

Appendix C
Parent Pre Assessment Survey
Tally Sheet

1. The school report card shows a clear understanding of student performance

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1,1,1,1,1,1	1,1,1,1,1,

6. Students display pride in their work.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1	1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1 ,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1, 1		1
10	20	0	1
32%	65%	0%	3%

7. Standardized tests show a clear reflection of a child's abilities.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1,1	1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1 ,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1	1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1 ,1,1	
2	17	12	0
6%	55%	39%	0%

8. Performance on tests accurately reflects performance in school.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1 ,1,1,1,1,1,	1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1 ,1,1,1,1,1,	
1	15	15	0
3%	48.5%	48.5%	0%

9. My child feels confident taking tests.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1,1,1	1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1 ,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1, 1	1,1,1,1,1,1,1	
3	21	7	0
10%	68%	22%	0%

10. Which of the following provides you with the most helpful information about your child's academic abilities and academic performance. Please rank by importance.

Rank	Report Card	Standardized Test Scores	Conferences with the Teacher	Class Assignments
1	1,1	1,1,	1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1	1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,
	2	2	15	10
	7%	7%	52%	34%
2	1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1	1,1,	1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1	1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1
	8	2	11	10
	28%	7%	38%	34%
3	1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1	1,1,1,1,1,1,	1	1,1,1,1,1
	17	6	1	5
	59%	21%	24%	17%
4	1,1,1,1	1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1	1,1,11	1,1,1
	4	19	4	3
	13%	67%	13%	17%

Appendix D
Parent Reading Interest Survey in regard to their child

Dear Parents,

Please take several minutes to help me learn more about your child's reading by responding to the questions below. Your answers will help to meet your child's individual needs. I appreciate the your time and input.

Sincerely,

Child's Name_____

Parent's Signature_____

1. How often does your child read at home?

daily	weekly	monthly

2. How often do you read with your child at home?

daily	weekly	monthly

3. Does your child enjoy reading?

4. What types of stories interest your child the most?

fiction/make believe	non-fiction/true stories	picture books
chapter books	adventure	biographies
poetry	newspapers	fantasy

5. What are your child's strengths in reading?

comprehension understands what is read	word identification learns and uses new words	story elements understands character, plot and setting
reads independently	reads critically makes predictions	fluency oral reading

6. What are your child's weakness in reading?

comprehension understands what is read	word identification learns and uses new words	story elements understands character, plot and setting
reads independently	reads critically makes predictions	fluency oral reading

7. What are your goals for your child in reading this year?

Please write any additional comments:

Appendix E
Informational letter to parents

Saint Xavier University
Consent to Participate in a Research Study
Improving Student Assessment Through The Implementation of Portfolios in Language Arts

Dear Parents,

This year in Reading and Language Arts, we will be using portfolios as an additional approach to assessment. This study is a part of our Action Research Project for our Master's Program at Saint Xavier University. Portfolios will contain a collection of work samples, surveys, student reflections, teacher observations, and checklists. The purpose of this study is to measure student growth and development over a period of time. Portfolios will not replace testing in the classroom, however, it will be a useful tool to measure student performance. This study will be conducted in Miss Cooper's first grade classroom and Mrs. Swiatek's third grade classroom at Western Trails Elementary School from September through January.

There are many benefits to using portfolios in the classroom. Students will take ownership in their work by selecting and self evaluating pieces. Students and parents will be able to see progress made throughout the year. Students will develop higher self-esteem and pride by sharing their portfolios with teachers, peers, parents, and principals.

Your child's name will remain confidential throughout the study. There are no additional costs to participate nor is there any monetary compensation for participating in the study. Individuals will not be placed at risk of physical discomfort or psychological distress.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary; refusal to participate involves no penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled. I understand that I may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am entitled. I also understand the investigator has the right to withdraw your child from the study at any time. If you have any questions about this research study, please feel free to contact us at 462-8935.

I acknowledge that the investigator has explained to me the need for this research identified the risks involved; and offered to answer any questions I may have about the nature of my participation. I freely and voluntarily agree to participate in this study. I understand all information gathered during the study will be confidential. I also understand that I may keep a copy of this consent form for my own information.

_____ _____

Signature of Voluntary Participant Date

Appendix F
Student Peer conference

Peer Conference

Names: _____

Date: _____

Three things I really liked about your portfolio are:

My one wish is:

I am glad you are in my class

Appendix G
Teacher and Student Portfolio Conference

Teacher and Student Portfolio Conference

Student_____ Date_____

Purpose of conference: The students and teacher will discuss the child's portfolio. Together we will identify the student's strengths and areas for improvement. The student and teacher will establish goals for the next quarter.

This is an example of my best work:

If I did this again I would:

I feel my strengths are:

Areas I can improve in are:

My goal is

Appendix H
Student Principal Conference

Principal Portfolio Conference

Name: _____

Date: _____

1. This is great work because...

2. One suggestion is .....

3. A goal is....

Family Conferencing Report

Carefully review the contents of your child's portfolio together. Discuss the topics below. Both you and your student may write comments. Return the portfolio along with this sheet on _____.

The piece I like the best is_____.
(Student)
because...

The piece I liked the best was_____.
(Parent)
because...

I would like to know more about... (Parent)

Some goals we have agreed on are:

1.

2.

3.

Parent Comments on Conference:

Student
Signature_____Date_____

Parent
Signature_____ Date_____

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"A portfolio is more than a 'folder' of student work; it is a deliberate, specific collection of accomplishments." - Hamm & Adams, 1991.

Appendix J
Student Self Evaluation of Portfolio

Portfolio Self Evaluation

1. Select at least one item in your portfolio that you feel is an example of your best work and explain why.

2. Select at least one item in your portfolio that you think you could have done better and explain why.

3. Name at least one academic area that you think you have improved in.

4. What is difficult for you in school?

5. What would you like to work on?

6. Establish a goal for your self.

Appendix K
Parent Post Assessment Regarding Assessment

Portfolio Assessment-Parent Survey

Name(optional)_____

1. My child enjoyed using portfolios in the classroom?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

2. Portfolios provide more progress than a test score?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

3. Portfolios helped your child see his/her growth and development?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

4. My child can self evaluate and judge his/her work as a result of portfolios?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

5. Portfolios helped me understand my child's academic ability?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

What are the strengths of portfolios?

_____

_____

What are the weaknesses of portfolios? _____

_____

Appendix L
Student Assessment Survey

Name_____
Date_____

Student Portfolio Survey

Please answer the following question honestly.

1. I enjoyed keeping a portfolio this year.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

2. I enjoyed conferencing with the Principal or Assistant Principal about my portfolio.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

3. I enjoyed conferencing with my teacher about my portfolio.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

4. I enjoyed conferencing with a peer about my portfolio.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

5. I enjoyed conferencing with my parents about my portfolio.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

6. My portfolio helps me to see my academic progress.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

7. I can self evaluate my work

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

8. I am proud of the work that is in my portfolio.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

9. I think my portfolio shows my strengths and weaknesses better than a test score does.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

10. I liked creating my own academic goals.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

11. I feel that I can achieve the goals I have set.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

12. I liked being a part of parent teacher conferences.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

13. What are some things you like about keeping a portfolio?

14. What are some things you didn't like about keeping a portfolio?

Parent Pre Assessment Survey
Classroom A
Tally Sheet

1. The school report card provides a clear understanding of my child's academic performance in school.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1,1,1,1	1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,		
4	13	0	0
24%	76%	0%	0%

2. Teacher graded tests and assignments provide me with a clear understanding of my child's academic performance in school.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1,1,1,1,1,1,1,	1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,,1		
7	10	0	0
41%	59%	0%	0%

3. Teacher graded tests and assignments gives my child a clear understanding of their academic strengths and weaknesses.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1,1,1,1,	1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,		
4	13	0	0
24%	76%	0%	0%

4.Who do you think should be involved in setting academic goals for your child?

Teacher	Parent and Teacher	Teacher, Parent and Student	Teacher and Student
	1,1,1,	1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,,1	
0	3	14	0
0%	18%	82%	0%

5. My child is able to self evaluate and judge their work.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1,1,1,	1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1	1,1,1,1,1,1	
3	8	6	0
18%	47%	35%	0%

6. My child displays pride in his/her work.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1,1,1,1,1	1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1		
5	12	0	0
29%	71%	0%	0%

7. Standardized test results provide me with an accurate reflection of my child's academic abilities.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1,1,	1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1	1,1,1,1,1,1	
2	9	6	0
12%	53%	35%	0%

8. My child's performance on tests accurately reflects their performance in school.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1	1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1	
1	8	8	0
6%	47%	47%	0%

9. My child feels confident taking tests.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1,1	1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1	1,1,1	
2	12	3	0
12%	70%	18%	0%

Parent Pre Assessment Survey
Classroom B

Tally Sheet

1. The school report card provides a clear understanding of my child's academic performance in school.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1,1	1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1	1,1,1,1,	
2	8	4	0
14%	57%	29%	0%

2. Teacher graded tests and assignments provide me with a clear understanding of my child's academic performance in school.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1,1,	1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1 ,,1	1,1	
2	10	2	0
14.5	71%	14.5%	0%

3. Teacher graded tests and assignments gives my child a clear understanding of their academic strengths and weaknesses.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1	1,1,1	
1	10	3	0
7%	71%	22%	0%

4.Who do you think should be involved in setting academic goals for your child?

Teacher	Parent and Teacher	Teacher, Parent and Student	Teacher and Student
	1,1,1,1,1,	1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,	
0	5	9	0
0%	36%	64%	0%

5. My child is able to self evaluate and judge their work.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
0	1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1	1,1,1,1,1,1	
0	8	6	0
0	57%	43%	0%

6. My child displays pride in his/her work.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1,1,1,1,1	1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,		1
5	8	0	1
36	57%	0%	7%

7. Standardized test results provide me with an accurate reflection of my child's academic abilities.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,	1,1,1,1,1,1	
0	8	6	0
0	57%	43%	0%

8. My child's performance on tests accurately reflects their performance in school.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
0	1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1	1,1,1,1,1,1	
0	8	6	0
0%	5%	43%	0%

9. My child feels confident taking tests.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1,	1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,	1,1,1,1	
1	9	4	0
7%	64%	29%	0%

Post Parent Assessment Survey
Classroom A
Tally Sheet

1. My child enjoyed using portfolios in the classroom.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1,1,1,1,	1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1, 1,1,1,1,	1	
4	14	1	0
21%	74%	5%	0%

2. Portfolios provide more progress than a test score.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1,1,	1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1, 1,1,1,1,	1,1,1,	
2	14	3	0
11%	73%	16%	0%

3. Portfolios helped your child see his/her growth and development.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1, 1,	1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,		
11	8	0	0
58%	42%	0%	0%

4. My child can self evaluate and judge his/her work as a result of portfolios.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,	1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,		
9	10	0	0
47%	53%	0%	0%

5. Portfolios help me understand my child's academic ability.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,	1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,		
8	10	0	0
44%	56%	0%	0%

What are the strengths of portfolios?
I liked watching their progress
I enjoyed the reader's response logs.
Being able to visually see progress and compare work to other older assignments
Shows progress
Opportunities to see and share work with my child
Assessments
I found none, enjoyed all, like the portfolio idea
You can look back and see improvement from grades, point of view, handwriting
It provides a glimpse of student work over time
I see how my child progresses from the start of the year to the end
It is nice to know what the kids think of their work.
They show improvement from beginning to end which is encouraging
Everyday work is included, variety of work covered, able to see what has been covered this year, a great memoir,
It shows her weaknesses and strengths
Portfolio is a very informative source of for parents to learn about their child's progress

What are the weaknesses of portfolios?
They can keep track of progress
Sometimes there isn't enough information in each section
The kids need to add more of their papers
It didn't seem to have much new work in it, papers need to have dates on them
Really they are graded
This should be done more often

Additional Comments
I love having the portfolio to go through
I enjoy reviewing them
I think it is a very good idea especially having them bring it home and the parent survey
Difficult to tell new papers from old.
Thanks for helping Billy bring out the best in himself this year through the development of this book

Post Student Assessment Survey
Class A

Tally Sheet

1. I enjoyed keeping a portfolio this year.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,	1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1, 1,1,1,1,	1,	
9	14	1	0
38%	58%	4%	0%

2. I enjoyed conferencing with the Principal or Assistant Principal about my portfolio.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1,1,1,	1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1, 1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,	1,1,	
3	19	2	0
13%	79%	8%	0%

3. I enjoyed conferencing about with my teacher about my portfolio.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1,1,1,1,1,	1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1, 1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,		
5	19	0	0
21%	79%	0%	0%

4. I enjoyed conferencing with a peer about my portfolio.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,	1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1, 1,	1,1,1,	
10	11	3	0
42%	46%	13%	0%

5. I enjoyed conferencing with my parents about my portfolio.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,	1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1, 1,1,1,1,	1,	
9	14	1	0
38%	58%	4%	0%

6. My portfolio helps me see my academic progress.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,	1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1, 1,1,1,1,1,		
9	15	0	0
38%	62%	0%	0%

7. I can self evaluate my work.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1,1,1,1,1,	1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1, 1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,		1,
5	18	0	1
21%	75%	0%	4%

8. I am proud of the work that is in my portfolio.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1, 1,	1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1, 1,1,	1,	
11	12	1	0
46%	50%	4%	0%

9. I think my portfolio shows my strengths and weaknesses better than a test score does.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,	1,1,1,1,1,1,1,	1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,	
8	8	9	0
33%	33%	38%	0%

10. I liked creating my own academic goals.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1, 1,1,	1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1, 1,1,		
12	12	0	0
50%	50%	0%	0%

11. I feel I can achieve the goals I set.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,	1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,		

	1,1,1,1,1,		
9	15	0	0
38%	62%	0%	0%

12. I liked being part of the parent teacher conferences.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1,1,1,1,	1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1, 1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,		
4	20	0	0
17%	83%	0%	0%

What are some things that you liked about keeping a portfolio?
It keeps my test scores
You remember what you did.
I have really good stuff in it.
I do a lot of writing
You could see your old things in it.
You can keep the stuff that you did over the year.
I like it to be nice and pretty
You can put my test scores in it.
You know what you did during the year.
That you keep your good work in it and see what you have done.
My good writing and good work.
I can see all my good work.
You don't have to put stuff in your folder
I can look back at what I did.
I like to see all the things that I have done in a year.
I like to draw in my portfolio
I like looking at things I did.
It is fun to see what I improved in.
I like accelerated reader points, paragraphs, stories and tests.
You can look back at what you did.
Seeing the good work I did
My art because it is great to draw
I can keep my work in a safe place.
I like looking back and seeing what I did.

What are some things you didn't like about keeping a portfolio?
My spelling
It was hard to keep the portfolio organized.
Making goals.

That we can't bring it home more often and show our parents
Reading tests look bad
My bad stuff is in it and embarrassing stuff is in it.
Everything always falls out.
My portfolio is so big.
I don't like all the things I did in my portfolio.
It gets messy
Seeing the bad things I did.
Keeping my portfolio in shape, it takes a lot of time

Parent Post Assessment Survey
Classroom B
Tally Sheet

1. My child enjoyed using portfolios in the classroom?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Agree
1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,	1,1,1,1,	1,	
9	4	1	0
64%	29%	7%	0%

2. Portfolios provide more progress than a test score?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Agree
1,1,1,1,1,1,	1,1,1,1,1,1,	1,1,	
6	6	2	0
38%	38%	14%	0%

3. Portfolios helped your child see his/her growth and development?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1	1,1,	1,	
11	2	1	0
79%	14%	7%	0%

4. My child can self evaluate and judge his/her work as a result of portfolios?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1,1,1,1,1,1,	1,1,1,1,1,1,1,	1,	
6	7	1	0
38%	50%	2%	0%

5. Portfolios helped me understand my child's academic ability?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1,1,1,1,1,1,1,	1,1,1,1,1,1,	1,	
7	6	1	0
38%	50%	2%	0%

What are the strengths of portfolios?
Before and After growth for handwriting and story telling
to show the child's true smarts instead of point averages
It shows how my child has come along and grown in knowledge from beginning to end of year.
It is fabulous to see how the children progress through out the year.
Personal growth through out the year.

This enables the parents to have an organized look at the progress of their child

What are the weaknesses of portfolios?
Not enough examples in the book. No standard to base work on.
I see no weaknesses at this point.
There isn't enough room to show all the work—which is all right, too much might be confusing I guess.
I wish it was double in size.
Test scores such as Stanford provides a better idea of grade level ability
Unclear indication of grade level ability
This is only a small amount of their work.

Additional comments
I would like to see the portfolio with test scores. At this age my child does not care to evaluate her work, she sees not difference.
I think they are great—We enjoyed doing the child/parent conference
Very impressive; I appreciate the time and effort that it takes on part of the teacher to organize such a documentation
I like portfolios since it shows me a passage of time of my child's work—the growth in the child's learning is more easily recognizable.

Student Post Assessment
Classroom B
Tally Sheet

1. I enjoyed keeping a portfolio this year.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,	1,1,1,		
19	3	0	0
86%	14%	0%	0%

2. I enjoyed conferencing with the Principal or Assistant Principal about my portfolio.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1	1,1,1,1,1,		
17	5	0	0
77%	23%	0%	0%

3. I enjoyed conferencing about with my teacher about my portfolio.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1	1,1,		
20	2	0	0
91%	9%	0%	0%

4. I enjoyed conferencing with a peer about my portfolio.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1	1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,	1,	1,
13	7	1	1
59%	31%	5%	5%

5. I enjoyed conferencing with my parents about my portfolio.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1	1		
21	1	0	0
95%	5%	0%	0%

6. My portfolio helps me see my academic progress.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1	1,1,1,1,1,1.		
16	6	0	0
73%	27%	0%	0%

7. I can self evaluate my work.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1	1,1,1,1,		
18	4	0	0
82%	18%	0%	0%

8. I am proud of the work that is in my portfolio.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1	1	1	
20	1	1	0
90%	5%	5%	0%

9. I think my portfolio shows my strengths and weaknesses better than a test score does.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1	1,1,1,1,1,1,		
16	6	0	0
73%	27%	0%	0%

10. I liked creating my own academic goals.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1	1,1,1,1,1		
17	5	0	0
77%	23%	0%	0%

11. I feel I can achieve the goals I set.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1	1,1,1,1,		
18	4	0	0
82%	18%	0%	0%

12. I liked being part of the parent teacher conferences.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1	1,1,1,1,1	1,1,	
15	5	2	0
68%	23%	9%	0%

Parent Post Assessment Survey
Classroom A and B
Tally Sheet

1. My child enjoyed using portfolios in the classroom?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Agree
1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,	1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,	1,1	
13	18	2	0
39%	85%	6%	0%

2. Portfolios provide more progress than a test score?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Agree
1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1	1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,